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On-station - Vol. 1 – July 2014



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CO'S CORNER



Skinny Dragon Ohana,

Welcome to our first official 2014-15 Deployment update! I am so proud of the amazing Skinny Dragon pride and professionalism that has been demonstrated throughout the U.S. SIXTH Fleet and U.S. Africa and European Command Areas of Responsibility. Our maintenance professionals, ground support experts, and our combat aircrews have been putting in long hours ensuring the highest levels of mission effectiveness. In just one month, we have excelled and set new standards of excellence for literally every mission available for the P-3C.

We continue to give thanks for the support of our families and friends that we have left behind. If you have any concerns or need any assistance with Navy support services, please do not hesitate to contact our two great Ombudsmen by email (skinnydragonombudsman@gmail.com) or by phone: Rebecca Mitchem (904-525-2313) and Ashley Flynn (618-365-0614).

On July 29th, I had the great honor of promoting two of the Navy's Finest Sailors, AE3 Mayra Juarez and AT2 Greg Householder, using the Command Advancement Program. On August 5th, we were very excited that three of our outstanding Skinny Dragons were selected to be Chief Petty Officers: AZC(Select) Stephanie Holzhauer, AMEC(Select) Ed McGregor, and AWOC(Select) Bob Cherhoniak!

Take great pride in what your Skinny Dragons are accomplishing in support of our great nation!

Ciao,
Skipper Hanks





SIGONELLA DIRECT

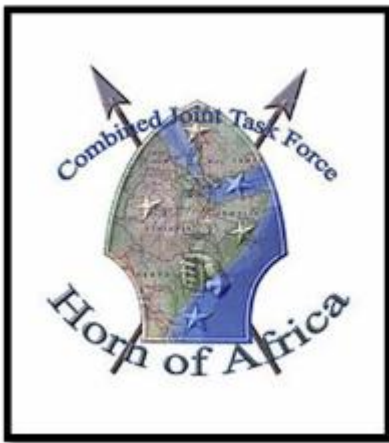


Buonjiorno dalla Sigonella! Hello from Sigonella! July has been a hectic start to deployment. We are flying a lot of hours and with a seven day work week, every day feels like Tuesday. Despite a busy flight schedule, we are trying to adjust to the Sicilian lifestyle. Fourth of July marked the arrival of the very last crew and we celebrated accordingly with burgers and a fireworks show on base. On the 11th, liberty off base was granted and the streets of Motta and Catania

were open to the Skinny Dragons. Even though liberty has begun we remain focused on completing our assigned missions with relentless zeal.



Mount Etna, viewed from the South



DJIBOUTI DIRECT

The Djibouti detachment is now completely established. As you can imagine the temperature is scorching with a high humidity index. Thus far, the record high dry bulb temperature has reached 130 degrees Fahrenheit, and is sure to be surpassed in the following few weeks as the heat of the summer continues to increase into August. The “sand box” as some of you remember, and others are unaware is unlike any other detachment site. Our living quarters are finely prepared cargo containers and the sand is actually a fine dust. None the less, spirits are up and our importance in the region is fresh on the minds of all while working day and night to complete the mission at hand. The daily life here is akin to that of a well oiled machine. The maintenance professionals work tirelessly to ensure the best aircraft are supplied to the flight crews for missions that are longer than those for training back home on Oahu. Therefore, if maintenance actions are required on the aircraft, a shorter window of opportunity is allotted to fulfill the task and get the planes back in the air. Thus far, the success of our mission has been made possible by the efforts of our great team of maintenance professionals. Things are going smoothly, especially given the location and environment. Fresh away from our families and friends back home, we have not forgotten about the reasons we all decided to join the Navy. We miss you and look forward to our mission accomplishment and homecoming, but also to our task in providing security for our beloved nation! Excitement, determination, and high hopes are on the minds of all stationed here in Djibouti!



Souda DIRECT

Yasas from Greece! The weather is perfect and the blue waters of the Mediterranean are stunning. Greek food here is fantastic and the locals are some of the most hospitable people in the world. The ancient structures make one feel as though they were stepping back into a time forgotten, a feeling hard to find anywhere in the world. It truly is a

beautiful place! But, we lucky few here in Greece are ever prepared to fly a mission when needed. We have hit the ground running by supporting operations in the Mediterranean Sea, executing the mission flawlessly. This has been accomplished by thorough mission prep, expert maintenance, and strong teamwork. None the less, we are always excited to take a reprieve from a day's hard work to explore and enjoy the Greek culture. With official business in mind, we held a re-enlistment for two Sailors off the coast. We miss you from the lands of Baklava, Tzatziki sauce, and Gyros.



Ursina Castle Ruins Clean-up

The community relations volunteering event at the Ursina Castle was fantastic! This was an opportunity to go out and see the beautiful area of Catania and meet some of the local Sicilians. We started off with sixteen U.S. Navy service members and then met up with another group at NAS I who consisted of Sailors, Marines, their spouses, and missionaries. On the ride over to Catania, the sites were beautiful and the architecture of the ruins was outstanding. At the ruins, we also met some locals that were there to assist us with cleaning in and around the castle.



We started as one group, walking down and picking up any trash we could find, somewhat like FOD (foreign object damage) walkdown. There was a lot of paper, plastic, and broken glass to be retrieved, but after several hours the area was free of debris. This was a great time to get to know some of the local people while working together to reach a goal. We managed to clear all trash, clean glasses, pull weeds growing out of the stone walls, and clear the roof of broken pieces of cement. After the cleaning was complete, we went to eat at an Italian restaurant where delicious food was served. I had an amazing time and learned so much information from being out there. I am very excited for the next volunteer opportunity to experience another community relations event. It was a great time and continues to improve our relations with the Sicilians.

A Night with the Commodore

Despite upholding an aggressive posture over the last weeks, being an operational patrol squadron detachment, the Skinny Dragons found time to enjoy a rewarding, desert picnic with the Commodore and Skipper. The taste of freedom, as it came to be known, consisted of hamburgers, hotdogs, watermelon, and a variety of tasty beverages, much akin to a summertime, down-home, good-ole, American backyard barbeque. With LT Richards as the grill master, the food quantity and quality was exceedingly great. The piece du résistance, however, was a cake dressed with both the American flag and that of our home station, Hawaii. Prior to commencing the party, the Commodore gave a congratulatory and motivational speech which lifted everyone's spirits. The speech was a great reminder of our importance in fighting terrorists around the world, and kept the focus of the night on the missions at hand for the near future. Our Djibouti team, made up of combat air crews, maintenance professionals, and ground support personnel, was able to partake for the first time as a whole in a social gathering for rewarding the exceptional efforts over the past few weeks.

This team gathering allowed for our Sailors to appreciate the impact that each respective group's efforts had on readiness and mission completion. All in all, the party allowed for the Detachment to "re-cage", a term used in the centering of a flight instrument that provides back up indications in aiding flight navigation, and be more prepared for the next week's schedule. In a sense, the party acted as a "weekend", where every day of deployment is a business day.

VP-4 IN ACTION







